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MotoGP

To and fro...

Two rounds and two winners. The stage is nicely swept and prepped for the expected Stoner-Lorenzo duel this season. The Australian owned the second act and another weather-disrupted Jerez. Stoner now has 17 consecutive podium finishes in MotoGP, equalling the haul of another Aussie great, Mick Doohan, and needs another six to take the outright record from Valentino Rossi

Photo by Honda Pro images



Watch MotoGP podcast
VIDEO



**MX**

Fiery Fermo...

After a damp beginning over Easter weekend in Holland, the FIM Motocross World Championship is warming-up in more ways than one and the temperatures at Fermo in Italy last weekend matched the fervour of the intensity of the battles for MX1 and MX2 glory. Read on for more details and photos. Here Tony Cairoli sends the fans into raptures during a second moto win

Photo by Ray Archer





Watch Fermo highlights
VIDEO





Watch SLC SX highlights

VIDEO



Dungey sizzler...

A third win of the dwindling AMA Supercross campaign for KTM and Ryan Dungey as Salt Lake City drew the calendar into the final phases. With only Las Vegas remaining who'd bet against the 2010 champion adding one more trophy to his impressive stock from '12 just two weeks before the Nationals get underway at Hangtown?

Photo by Steve Cox



AMA-MX



ONE MAN

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MX

GRAND PRIX OF ITALY

FERMO · APRIL 29th · Rnd 3 of 16

MX1 winner: Christophe Pourcel, Kawasaki

MX2 winner: Jeffrey Herlings, KTM

ITALIAN JOB

By Adam Wheeler, all photos by Ray Archer



Pourcel heads Paulin. After Bulgaria this was the second 'bout' and it went down to the penultimate corner of the last lap. Cairoli was adrift in third and a battle between the three was ruled out in the second moto with Paulin's first turn mistake



The smile comes easier. The looks are a little less suspicious. For the moment the detachment that seems a mix between timidity and a shade of arrogance remains. It was interesting and long overdue to have Christophe Pourcel back on top of a Grand Prix podium. In fact – despite several moto success and podiums towards the end of 2011 - it has been five long years since this mercurial rider stood victorious, and on that occasion the success was also celebrated in Italy.

Back in 2007 in what was a heated title defence with Tony Cairoli Pourcel lapped-up the fact he had beaten the Sicilian on home turf. At Fermo last weekend the old MX2 rivals chatted and joked through the podium ceremony. Pourcel commenting to French media people that both riders were more mature since the days of line-cutting and sniping. Cairoli is 26 and Pourcel, at 23, is the reigning triple champion's toughest opponent for a fourth title in 2012.



A 3-1 scorecard for the World Champion. "A lot of riders struggled here and me also but I like the track a lot. It had been well prepared with technical places. I'm really satisfied. This could have been a struggle for the championship but it turned out OK."

At Fermo Cairoli fought, Desalle frowned, Paulin flicked and scrubbed and De Dycker barrelled the KTM into the face of the Monterosato hill. In the midst of it all Pourcel found his lines, bounced through the ruts and bumps and apart from an engine stall in the first moto that set up an exciting last lap climax to his duel with countryman and brand-mate Paulin, was inch-perfect. The Italian dirt wanted another victim but the best it could manage was a rock to the Frenchman's face that scattered blood across his shirt (bizarrely Pourcel's

older brother Seb suffered the same injury). Other riders had not escaped so lightly: Honda's Rui Goncalves ripped a groin muscle, Joel Roelants was dumped to the floor descending the steepest and most frightening part of the track and sustained a concussion that left him vomiting. Elliott Banks Browne ripped his thumb, Jorge Zaragoza broke his right wrist. Michael Leib twisted his left knee and David Philippaerts' right eye was smashed with a rock and he looked like someone out of a Hollywood bar fight after the motos had finished.

Searle was mugged by misfortune (and Jeffrey Herlings) in Italy one week after winning the Bulgarian Grand Prix. He described his second moto performance from last to second spot just three seconds behind Herlings as one of his best ever



Watch Herlings/Searle crash
VIDEO

The rippling ruts of Monterosato were a challenge that everyone faced (even the fans in scaling the hill to find a vantage point) and not everyone enjoyed.

For all the speed of Cairoli and Pourcel the embodiment of confidence in MX1 right now is Paulin and the rookie was unlucky to crash on the first turn in the second moto otherwise he might have figured for a third win in the last four MX1 meetings.

Elsewhere it was encouraging to see Honda's Evgeny Bobryshev building back up to full fitness

and it will be only matter of time before De Dycker is back on the GP box.

Fermo was an early landmark in the MX2 championship story after Tommy Searle's first moto DNF through mechanical trouble (caused by a blameless first lap crash) and then the coming together with Herlings down the start-straight that sent both to the ground and instigated a phenomenal charge back to finish second and first respectively.

Jeremy Van Horebeek picked up silverware in spite of a headache caused by a first moto crash. Handling ruts like these were key to success and survival at Fermo



It was clear gamesmanship by Herlings who left Searle with nowhere to go and understandably the Englishman was livid afterwards. There will be a second part to the flare-up and the dispute could become tasty in the coming months despite Herlings' public attempt to smother the flames. MX2 witnessed Jeremy Van Horebeek's first podium of the season with Belgian rival Roelants out of the picture and a remarkable performance by Michael Leib who reluctantly filled the role of 'outcast' in a miserable year with Husqvarna

in 2011 but obviously relished being on the factory Yamaha to go 3-3. Whether the American will now stick around in the injury-hit team beyond his two-race agreement and travel to Mexico and Brazil is one of the pertinent issues in the class.

Herlings was a marked man after the second moto incident with Searle but even the controversy couldn't eclipse what was simply a quite brilliant ride from near-last to win. Apparently not just quick on sand...



Five days after an operation to remove his right anterior cruciate ligament Steven Frossard tried to compete in Italy. His efforts in the motos were ultimately curtailed as someone had stolen his knee brace prior to the race



Watch Fermo feature
VIDEO

Ken De Dycker might not have found the podium yet on the KTM but the Belgian finally has something that has been missing for large parts of his career: consistency. An outside bet at the title?





The look says it all. Clement Desalle was uncomfortable for most of the weekend at the track where he won in 2010. A podium finish however put his title plight back on course after the mistake and crash in Bulgaria



Fatigued and nursing a twisted knee Michael Leib was still a major talking point of the weekend. The American gave Yamaha their first podium of the year and firmly left his seasons of GP obscurity in 2010 and 2011 behind him



Evgeny Bobryshev was no longer sailing close to the wind on the factory Honda. On the evidence of his performance in Italy the Russian will soon be in a position to win again after his thumb dislocation





Paulin was again fast and confident on the factory Kawasaki. Pourcel commented on his countryman's smooth approach to the KX450F but wondered if Paulin would have the experience to handle the 450 when tiredness sets in. So far '21' has done little wrong





Watch Fermo Feature
VIDEO





CLASSIFICATION & WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

MX1 OVERALL RESULT

Riders

1	Christophe Pourcel, FRA	Kawasaki
2	Tony Cairoli, ITA	KTM
3	Clement Desalle, BEL	Suzuki
4	Gautier Paulin, FRA	Kawasaki
5	Ken De Dycker, BEL	KTM

MX2 OVERALL RESULT

Riders

1	Jeffrey Herlings, NED	KTM
2	Michael Leib, USA	Yamaha
3	Jeremy Van Horebeek, BEL	KTM
4	Jordi Tixier, FRA	KTM
5	Jose Butron, ESP	KTM

MX1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 3 OF 16 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Tony Cairoli	133
2 Gautier Paulin	116
3 Christophe Pourcel	106
4 Clement Desalle	105
5 Ken De Dycker	95

MX2 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 3 OF 16 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Jeffrey Herlings	144
2 Jeremy Van Horebeek	114
3 Tommy Searle	109
4 Joel Roelants	85
5 Max Anstie	80



KTM CONFIRM DE DYCKER FOR REST OF 2012

Jeremy Van Horebeek proved to be the fastest of Red Bull KTM's riders in the competition to change the rear wheel of Tony Cairoli's 350SX-F at the KTM media event on the beach of Porto San Giorgio on Friday evening. The Austrians – as to be expected – laid on a slick and fun event at a local bar some 15km from the Fermo race-track that was less a formal presentation and more a celebration of the effort and resources the factory put into their motocross racing.

KTM took the opportunity to provide a nugget of decent news to the media corps in that Belgian Ken De Dycker will remain on the factory team for the rest of 2012 and not just until the Grand Prix of Brazil at which his initial five-race agreement was due to expire. The arrangement with the former MX1 GP winner was sealed after his 'escape' from an unhappy tenure with LS Honda one week before the first Grand Prix and in the wake of KTM lacking firepower in the premier class with German Max Nagl still not free from the woods with his back injury.

Allegedly the 'five race' agreement was as much of a smoke screen for De Dycker's transition into the team as it was a probation period for the 27 year old who has now steered factory-

backed machinery for Honda, Suzuki and Yamaha since 2006. With an encouraging 6th in Holland, 4th in Bulgaria and 5th in Italy (and some smart concessionary riding to allow Tony Cairoli generous track space in Sevlievo) De Dycker was understandably thrilled to be welcomed back to a works set-up.

Bringing his own sponsorship to the operation – perhaps a factor that clinched the KTM association in the first place – De Dycker had been running semi-factory equipment and a carburetted engine on the 450SX-F that had not been wheeled-out during 2011 as Nagl had formed up on the 350SX-F with Cairoli.

According to MX1 team manager Claudio De Carli De Dycker will now start to receive official material in a progression of machinery up until the spec prepared for Nagl and, of course, given a major spotlight thanks to Ryan Dungey's early success in the AMA Supercross arenas.

And Van Horebeek's time for a full wheel change (including a run around the bike and performed in front of a 60-strong audience) was sub-one minute and faster than Tony Cairoli's effort!





PICK UP A DUNGEEY NATIONS RACE SHIRT

Memorabilia and nostalgia; people love it, and coming across rare items and contributing to a good cause at the same time is a worthy activity.

Long-time Motocross press worker and fashion photographer Mike Van Cleven is offering a rare Ryan Dungey signed race jersey from the 2010 Motocross of Nations from Thunder Valley, Denver in an auction to raise funds for an urgent operation for partner Michelle Warneke, a victim of a serious accident last summer. The Belgian model requires brain surgery and a fund has been created to help finance the costly procedure and reach a target of 10,000 euros for the medical bill by mid May.

To read more and also stand a chance of owning the shirt of Honda World Motocross' Rui Goncalves click **here**.

FAENZA NEXT FOR GP?

After Youthstream confirmed that the penultimate Grand Prix of the season on September 9th would take place in Italy rumours have intensified over the location of the meeting. At Fermo the Faenza circuit, some 70km east of Bologna was emerging as the likely host for round fifteen on the calendar. Faenza – another daunting hillside layout – saw remarkable scenes in 2008 when David Philippaerts became Italy's first MX1 world champion but last witnessed GP action in the weather-hit 2009 edition (see right). The rain turned the site into a quagmire, although the odds of a similar occurrence in September have to be slim.

"I would be very happy if we went back," said the Yamaha rider. "The club do a good job there and it is important for Italy and the sport here that we can run two Grands Prix."





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ITALIAN WAY...

By Adam Wheeler



Fermo is an amazing track. 'Amazing' in the sense that several features really stand out rather than it being a symbol of grandeur. The hard-pack dirt, near vertical climbs and tight corners and the quite-wonderful landscape mean this is the most Italian of off-road racing events.

For the third year in a row Fermo blessed the FIM Motocross World Championship with sunshine. It would be unbearable to think what the place would be like if the heavens opened. The perils of compact Italian venues under a deluge of rain was seen at Faenza in 2009 where the racing was not only farcical but the wave of water that rolled down the hill turned the circuit into a logistical nightmare.

The site in Fermo is poised like a beacon on a sharp peak opposite the town centre (check out the photos in the report) and the effects of an adverse climate are not worth thinking about. Thankfully sun cream rather than wellington boots were the order of the weekend and the majesty of Grand Prix on this stage was fully apparent.

From a position looking around the weaving layout, the jumps - and in particular the frighteningly steep downhill descent that is perhaps the most characteristic element of the course - allowed a full appreciation of the sport.

Professional motocross - in my perception - is essentially based on four adrenaline-inducing sensations: the feeling of beating the challenge posed by 'mother nature' (the terrain and the way it changes) at tremendously high speed, the delight of flight, the domination/ultimate control of machinery and the buzz of overtaking.

The juice of motocross is inherent in at least two of these extremely hazardous facets of the past-time...and we get surprised and often disappointed when a rider, albeit a highly-tuned athlete, breaks a bone, ligament or worse.

...tracks like Fermo demonstrate everything beautiful and irrational about motocross...

As Steve Cox blogged in the previous issue of OTOR while the danger aspect of the sport is often left lurking and ignored in the corner like a naughty child it is always there and cannot (for reasons of safety) and should not (for reasons of the very essence of MX) be shunned.

Strange and fascinating tracks like Fermo that demonstrate everything beautiful and irrational about motocross have to be embraced in a weird way.

There are not many places that force you to confront why you are gripped by a particular activity but in an environment provided like the one in Italy last week there is a touch of euphoria about the time and place.

Maybe it is not only the riders who can grasp that 'glad to be alive' take on the whole thing...



Ride a lap of Fermo
VIDEO

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MotoGP

GRAN PREMIO bwin de ESPAÑA

JEREZ · APRIL 29th · Rnd 2 of 18

MotoGP winner: Casey Stoner, Honda

Moto2 winner: Pol Espargaro, Kalex

Moto3 winner: Romano Fenati, FTR Honda

ONE ALL...

By Gavin Emmett

Photos by Honda Pro Images/Northcott,
Milagro, Ducati Corse Press
www.yamahamotogp.com



One HEART.



The Grand Prix started like this and caused much consternation over settings and tyre provisions across practice



Ride a lap of Jerez
VIDEO

The weather played a huge part in proceedings during the Jerez weekend with the only near-dry practice coming for MotoGP during qualifying. With a serious threat of further rain looming large however, the hour-long session became a game of cat and mouse as the riders looked to take advantage of the constantly improving conditions. Forced to forego their usual work on race set-up, a dry race on Sunday was expected to be a lottery, and going by the first few laps, that certainly looked to be the case.

Perhaps the most crucial part in the race result were the decisions made on the grid which formed about half an hour after the Moto2 race had been red-flagged due to a downpour. The track was fairly dry, with spots of rain still in the air, but nonetheless all the MotoGP riders went with slick tyres. The majority of the front-runners went with the softer option front and rear Bridgestones, with Cal Crutchlow the only exception going with the new hard-compound front like the rest of the field.



Although Lorenzo had started from pole, Pedrosa made his usual good start and led his compatriot into the first corner, with Crutchlow getting away well to beat Hayden up to turn one. Stoner had been blocked off by Hayden's move to the outside, and with Spies also in his way the Australian was forced down to eighth as he began with a degree of caution.

The riders weren't exactly tiptoeing around the darker areas of asphalt that demarcated the damp zones and there were several near misses on the frenetic opening

laps, two involving Cal Crutchlow. First of all the Briton was forced to pick up his bike in turn five to avoid a puddle but narrowly missed Lorenzo's back wheel, then at the following corner he barged Hayden to the outside of the track when his cooled carbon brakes took longer than normal to kick in.

Pedrosa remained unaware of the chaos going on behind as Lorenzo collided with Dovizioso's knee in the hairpin and Hayden then proceeded to pass the Italian around the outside.



If the battle at the front was tense then the dice for third position was equally so. Cal Crutchlow's progression as a MotoGP rider is such that many were touting the Brit for a podium before the race. He almost made it but that twelve year dry spell continues in the premier class for the UK

As the jostling continued, Stoner had been making steady progress by taking advantage of his rivals' misfortune and was eventually in a position to attack on the third lap.

Heading down the back straight he outfoxed Pedrosa on the brakes, but as the Spaniard tried to defend he allowed Lorenzo through on the inside and Hayden around his outside. Pedrosa admitted afterwards his prudence at this point cost him a shot at victory, as Dovizioso also soon came past.

Stoner began to try and pull away, but Lorenzo would go with him and despite Hayden's attempts to follow he

eventually would drop back through the pack. Eventually Pedrosa came back through to third, but as he did so he brought along Crutchlow, whose front tyre by now was looking like the optimal choice with the rain staying away.

The gap between the leader and second place hovered around a second throughout the race but when the margin dropped to three-tenths on lap 18 the arm-pump issue which struck Stoner in Qatar was likely worrying Honda.

A decent front row qualifying spot for Nicky Hayden only translated into eighth place in the race. The American described his Ducati as having great potential



The gap only got closer on the antepenultimate lap, when Lorenzo closed right in on the run up to turn 13, but the following burst of speed from the Australian was seriously impressive and sealed his first GP victory at the legendary circuit.

With Lorenzo in second, Pedrosa was forced to push to the limit to hold off Crutchlow who eventually set the fastest lap of the race. Given a couple more laps, the duo would also have been involved in the battle for the win, with less than 2.5 seconds covering the top four, the tightest margin since Qatar 2010.

Dovizioso had a lonely ride to fifth, whilst Bautista had eventually pulled away from Bradl and Hayden who had battled hard for seventh. The German rookie won through and left the American just a spot ahead of his team-mate Valentino Rossi, who in turn had been required to scrap throughout with Hector Barbera once more.

Randy de Puniet had a fuel line issue on the penultimate lap that meant his Aspar colleague Aleix Espargaró finished as top CRT, a great day for the family after his brother Pol had won the curtailed and hectic Moto2 event.

Three weeks after becoming the seventh youngest rider of all time to finish on the podium (his debut nonetheless) Romano Fenati's first Moto3 win broke an 11 year record for consecutive rostrum appearances by a rookie



Pol Espargaro, a former 125cc GP winner at Jerez, was 20th in his second Moto2 appearance at the track in 2011. A year later and he was celebrating his first win





After setting the Moto3 pace all through winter testing the KTM arm of the class have yet to reach that top step. With the resources and know-how involved however it is only a matter of time...



Six of Valentino's 200 appearances in the premier class involved wins at Jerez. How many more does he have left in him?









Jerez paddock girls

VIDEO



THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

Following on from his stunning second place on debut in Qatar, rookie Romano Fenati left onlookers speechless as he recorded his maiden Grand Prix in record fashion in Jerez. The Moto3 race had also started with another impressive youngster on pole, after Alex Rins took top spot in a tricky qualifying session in what was also his second GP start.

A few damp patches cost some of the front-runners in the early laps, which left the 16 year-old duo out front. With over twenty crashers, it seemed inevitable that their combined experience of two races may not see them through, as they pushed on at a pace no-one else could match.

Midway through, Rins did become a victim of the conditions but miraculously recovered to fourth after a trip through the gravel and later a crash.

Meanwhile Fenati amazingly kept his cool to take victory with a 36-second margin over second place, the biggest in the lightweight class since Fausto Gresini in 1987. He now leads the championship, becoming the youngest rider ever to do so in the process. The Ascoli-born racer has set tongues wagging across Europe and now looks set to be a real threat to title-favourite Maverick Viñales who ran off track but recovered to sixth. It mustn't be forgotten either that Viñales himself is only 17.





ROSSI & CREW BAFFLED

Aglum Valentino Rossi revealed he and his experienced team of mechanics were at a loss on how to solve the issues that led to him qualifying in 13th position on the grid in Jerez. Setting a lap time nearly three and a half seconds behind Jorge Lorenzo in pole, the nine-times World Champion was the last of the prototype machines and out-qualified by the CRT Aprilia of Randy de Puniet.

To add insult to injury, his team-mate Nicky Hayden picked up the Italian factory's first front row start since 2010 and was 2.4 seconds quicker than Rossi, and 'the Doctor' admitted that the team are baffled: "My team have been working with different bikes for 30 years and have tried every trick they know, but nothing works. My style does not work on this bike."

When asked why Hayden was able to do a vastly superior time Rossi explained, "the setting Nicky is using is different to mine and he obviously is able to turn into the corner better than me and at normal speed. If I try this setting the front tyre ends up wearing out too quickly."

In the race Hayden battled for the lead and made some awesome overtaking manoeuvres despite the tricky conditions, before eventually dropping to eighth after battling new-boy Stefan Bradl.

Rossi meanwhile laboured over the first few laps but battled through a group featuring Barbera, Abraham and Ben Spies to finish ninth, albeit six seconds behind Hayden.

CLASSIFICATIONS & WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS

MotoGP RESULT

Riders

1	Casey Stoner, AUS	Honda
2	Jorge Lorenzo, SPA	Yamaha
3	Dani Pedrosa, SPA	Honda
4	Cal Crutchlow, GBR	Yamaha
5	Andrea Dovizioso, ITA	Yamaha

MotoGP CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 2 OF 18 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Jorge Lorenzo	45
2 Casey Stoner	41
3 Dani Pedrosa	36
4 Cal Crutchlow	26
5 Andrea Dovizioso	22



Moto2 RESULT

Riders

1	Pol Espargaro, SPA	Kalex
2	Marc Marquez, SPA	Suter
3	Thomas Luthi, SUI	Kalex
4	Scott Redding, GBR	Kalex
5	Takaaki Nakagami, JPN	Kalex

Moto2 CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 2 OF 17 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Marc Marquez	45
2 Pol Espargaro	41
3 Thomas Luthi	27
4 Scott Redding	23
5 Andrea Iannone	22

Moto3 RESULT

Riders

1	Romano Fenati, ITA	FTR Honda
2	Luis Salom, SPA	Kalex KTM
3	Sandro Cortese, GER	KTM
4	Alex Rins, SPA	Suter Honda
5	Alexis Masbou, FRA	Honda

Moto3 CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 2 OF 17 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Romano Fenati	45
2 Maverick Viñales	35
3 Luis Salom	33
4 Sandro Cortese	32
5 Alex Rins	19



NEW BENCHMARKS...

By Gavin Emmett

Casey Stoner described his win at Jerez as “one of the greatest races of my career”. That’s a bold statement from a two-time MotoGP World Champion, who has racked up 33 premier class triumphs since his Ducati debut in 2007 – easily more than any other rider in that period. It also became first time the Aussie had taken to the top step of the podium at the Andalusian venue, completing the full house of having won at all 18 of this season’s racetracks – the only rider in the championship to have done so.

Sat waiting for a delayed return to England with the BBC’s (and OTOR’s) Matt Roberts at Malaga, the pair of us racked our brains to think of any races where Stoner has performed better than at Jerez. We thought of that storming 2007 effort at Qatar for Ducati, and any one of the five scintillating successes at Phillip Island. Even recalling him sailing to glory through Silverstone’s deluge last year didn’t dampen the gloss on the performance he put in under gloomy skies at the Spanish GP.

With spots of rain falling, Stoner was sat on a prolonged grid having fitted the softer option front and rear Bridgestone slicks. Crucially he had suffered on a similar combination of tyres in qualifying, which was also the only near-dry session the field had ridden in during the whole weekend.

Starting from the second row in fifth - his worst start since the Ducati days - he was behind his main rivals Jorge Lorenzo and Dani Pedrosa. Pole-sitter Lorenzo had beaten him at the opening round in Qatar after an arm-pump problem hit, and had been victorious at Jerez for the last couple of seasons, including a win in similar conditions last year.

Alongside the championship leader sat his Repsol Honda team-mate Pedrosa, who had not been outside the top two at the emblematic track since making his MotoGP debut there in 2006.

The bookies had the two Spanish heroes as favourites, and a frenetic opening few laps suggested they were in with a shout of reaping rewards for the punters once more.

However Stoner made light of a horrid start which relegated him to eighth in turn one, and steadily picked his way through the field before hitting the front with a calculated move on Pedrosa at the tight turn six.

Stoner completed the full house of having won at all 18 of this season’s tracks

Sidestepping wet patches and avoiding the perilous white lines, his pace was only matched by Lorenzo, and when the Mallorcan closed within a whisker on the 25th lap his barren run looked set to continue.

Despite twinges of the arm numbness that had affected him in the desert, despite the lack of adhesion from his frazzled tyres and despite the roar of the 100,000-plus crowd willing on his rival, he pulled out a stunning penultimate lap which created too much of a gap even for Lorenzo to breach.

Victory in Spain was his and just like with Lorenzo in Losail, he had made a statement that 2012 was going to be as unpredictable as the southern Spanish weather.



AMA-SX

SALT LAKE CITY

RICE-ECCLES STADIUM • APRIL 28th • Rnd 16

Supercross winner: Ryan Dungey, KTM

SX Lites West winner: Eli Tomac, Honda



DUNGEY HATRICK AS END IS NIGH

By Steve Matthes, photos by Steve Cox



We always expect the top guys in the sport to come back from injury and just be the 'top guy' once again. We've seen it time and time again (except for Chad Reed who came back into supercross on a Kawasaki and was getting sevenths and eighths which remains to this day one of the weirdest things ever) and this past weekend in Salt Lake City, Ryan Dungey showed that maybe it took a week longer but, yep, he's still the man.

The KTM rider came back last weekend in Seattle and was just so-so. He didn't post fast times in practice and he wasn't really coming through the pack when he made contact with Justin Brayton and could only muster a sixth. It's not like sixth is terrible but, as I said, when you're a big dog...you just always are a big dog. No matter what, there is no real drop-off in performance most times.

In Salt Lake City though, Dungey captured his third win of the year with a great ride. He gated ok, was put off the track by Kawasaki's Jake Weimer, dusted himself off, caught and passed Weimer and then with one lap and one turn remaining took advantage of leader David Millsaps' mistake and won the whole shooting match. In the process he had the best time of the race by almost a second and showed that he's on-point once again.



Watch Dungey interview
VIDEO



Metres and just seven points split the best of the survivors from 2012 - Millsaps (18) and Brayton (10) - in the battle to be runner-up in the series. Millsaps would earn his fourth podium of the year at SLC



Great ride for JGR Yamaha's Millsaps who put a nice hold onto second in the points going into the final round and in what has been a tumultuous season for the team, Millsaps has come through in spades. With the 'James Stewart released from JGR Yamaha announcement' coming on Monday after Vegas, the JGR guys

hope to also have a 'career best for Millsaps PR' coming right behind it.

With the season in tatters, the promoters were at least hoping that the 250 west series would go down to the wire in Las Vegas but in a scenario that just fitted the theme for 2012, Pro Circuit's Dean Wilson crashed out and TLD



Honda's Cole Seely also went out in practice and that gave GEICO Honda's Eli Tomac (the points leader by four coming in) the title. With Wilson battling a shoulder injury that's rumored to need surgery and keep the defending champion out of some, if not all, the Outdoors, there was a slim chance for Dean

to win the title anyways. But he soldiered-on in a somewhat heroic effort. The final nail was being caught and passed by Tomac in the Main and then while desperately trying to make something happen, going down hard on his, yep, you guessed it, bad shoulder.

Wilson could walk away from SLC but was empty-handed. Pro Circuit were also dry in Supercross in 2012



Watch Lites highlights
VIDEO

But in the end it's my opinion that Eli Tomac was the best racer on the west coast week-in and week-out. Tomac rebounded nicely from a heartbreaking loss last year to show that he's got an incredibly bright future in the sport. If one wanted to nit-pick you could mention his outdoor results maybe not being what many

thought they could be, but indoors Tomac's a quick study. After a so-so Anaheim 1 last season, Tomac's been one of the best 250 supercrossers in two years.

It's also a statement about the GEICO Honda squad who captured both indoor Lites crowns this year (Justin Barcia got the East) and they

Peak-scaler. Brayton still has a chance to mark his best season to-date with the no.2 plate



are continuing their assault on the mighty Pro Circuit Kawasaki team. With GEICO going away from PC exhausts and motor assistance this year, the rivalry is setting itself up to be one for years to come.

It's fitting that in this season of injuries and lack of championship drama that Tomac's title was clinched with injuries to his two main competitors. We're limping into Las Vegas with nothing much going on and it's just been one of those seasons for the supercross series. Onto Vegas we go...







AMA-SX CLASSIFICATION & CHAMPIONSHIP

AMA SUPERCROSS RESULT

Riders

1	Ryan Dungey, USA	KTM
2	Davi Millsaps, USA	Yamaha
3	Jake Weimer, USA	Kawasaki
4	Justin Brayton, USA	Honda
5	Mike Alessi, USA	Suzuki

AMA SUPERCROSS LITES WEST COAST RESULT

Riders

1	Eli Tomac, USA	Honda
2	Jason Anderson, USA	Suzuki
3	Martin Davalos, USA	Suzuki
4	Wil Hahn, USA	Honda
5	Marvin Musquin, FRA	KTM

AMA SUPERCROSS STANDINGS (AFTER 16 OF 17 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Ryan Villopoto	323
2 Davi Millsaps	244
3 Justin Brayton	237
4 Ryan Dungey	232
5 Jake Weimer	211

AMA SUPERCROSS LITES WEST STANDINGS

Riders	Points
1 Eli Tomac	159
2 Dean Wilson	132
3 Marvin Musquin	127
4 Cole Seely	119
5 Jason Anderson	95

Tomac hunts down Wilson. Honda grabbed both Lites titles and number 17 toasted four wins and two more podiums to make the West Coast domain his



Watch Tomac interview
VIDEO

SHORT & SEATTLE TO THE RESCUE

With Andrew Short's win in Seattle completing a wild and wacky night, it was proof that with supercross you just never know what is going to happen. The 2011 supercross season was one for the ages with a five-rider battle for the win almost every weekend. But the 2012 supercross season is one for the toilet bowl. Injuries have wrecked the field and produced some of the most anti-climatic racing in recent memory. In fact Ryan Villopoto clinched the title earlier than any other rider on record. It was a forgone conclusion that the Kawasaki star was going to win and once he did, not even he was immune to the curse of '12 as he hurt his knee in Seattle and is now out for the year.

In all my years of covering this sport as a media member or as a mechanic, I have to say that the recent New Orleans SX was one of the worst ever. There was a sparse crowd

and hardly any atmosphere (little surprise with hometown legend Kevin Windham also on the sidelines). The racing was dull and I was thoroughly bored throughout the evening. All I could do was close my eyes and think about last year and how awesome that was.

But then, like a ray of sunshine through the storm clouds, Seattle came and we saw Short win his first career race. It was an awesome moment and everyone in the pits was happy for the veteran, especially as his team was in the lurch when their title sponsor pulled out a while ago.

Great to see and then in second was 18-year old Ken Roczen on a KTM 350! It was a bizarre night with just enough emotions and good times thrown in to make you remember why, after the gate drops on a Saturday night, you just might see something that you've never seen before.





DV FINDS THE RIGHT WEY

Motosport.com/Ti Lube Kawasaki privateer Nick Wey's been doing this pro racing thing for a long time now. Once a top Team Green rider who was groomed for greatness on the Pro Circuit team, Wey's never won a title (he's just got one race victory in 15 years of competition) but he's been on the podium in the 450 class a bunch, finished top ten in a ton of series and overall had a career that many would be more than happy to have enjoyed.

But in the classic 'you can still teach an old dog new tricks' movement Wey's been working with former GP winner, AMA supercross and national winner David Vuillemin this season. Although he's been hurt and missed a few races here and there, the addition of Vuillemin to Wey's program has been a bonus. Vuillemin retired a few years ago and like a lot of racers is looking for something to do in that next life.

Thankfully, Vuillemin made some good money and isn't forced to do something he doesn't want to.

Wey says that Vuillemin is helping him quite a bit with race-craft and how to approach things on race-day. Nick's a bit of a worrier and DV is helping him focus his energy on what's important: the 20 laps. Also during the week Vuillemin is out at the Kawasaki track assiting Nick with technique and trying to get some speed.

Wey's best result has been a tenth this year so it hasn't made a huge difference in results on the track quite yet but kudos to Wey for not being stuck in his ways and looking outside the box for help. The unlikely pairing has also produced some great comedy off the track and for the banter, bickering and arguing it is well worth hanging out in the team's pit!



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ALL OVER IN BLUE...

By Steve Matthes

The rumours are out there. They're lurking around. Some are based on fact and some in fiction. Make no mistake about it though, I've been around long enough that I know where there is smoke, there's fire. And right now, the JGR Yamaha/James Stewart relationship is smoldering and threatening to turn into a full blaze. No one is saying much but in talking to the JGR Yamaha guys, it seems that they've moved on. Their big dollar three-year contract offered to and signed by Stewart is not going to be worth much real soon.

We can all see that the results that James has produced for the JGR guys aren't what he or they have been expecting. It's been a rough season for Stewart with two wins and a podium. It's been a disaster for Stewart and the JGR guys as crashes and ineffectiveness has left everyone searching for answers as to the reason why.

Stewart, allegedly, is not happy with the technical side and the JGR guys have been trying everything and anything to make him happy.

Different fork sizes, a completely reworked tank and radiator shroud area and a rubber mounted eccentric motor mount are all indications that JGR has put some serious time and effort into trying to make it work for Stewart. In the end - if the good sources I have are to be believed - we'll see a PR released after the Las Vegas SX announcing the departure of Stewart from the JGR Yamaha team.

It's not going to be an acrimonious departure; it's both parties realizing that they're not getting what they wanted out of the arrangement.

Again, if the rumours are true Stewart will find himself on a Suzuki shortly after the release and on the line for the first AMA Motocross National at Hangtown, California on May 19th.

Even if he doesn't line up for this summer's nationals, it appears that he is done at JGR and the only thing left is for the lawyers to clean up the details. It's an admirable move for the lightning-rod-for-criticism-Stewart because in his JGR contract there wasn't a provision that said he had to race nationals. If he chose to, Stewart could have hung out at the beach all summer and collected the JGR cash. Instead he's walking away to race this summer for what is probably a few years salaries for us commoners but a nice haircut for him. James is in effect betting on himself and his skills. He knows the Suzuki works for him, after all he was in talks with them before the 2012 season but in the end thought that JGR could get a bike working for him.

Just by seeing a yellow front fender in front of him will make Stewart feel better and in effect, help him go faster. Stewart's been working hard during his time off from a hand injury and apparently dropped a pant size since the start of the supercross season. Clearly he's ready for the outdoors to start and with defending champion Ryan Villopoto's injury, it's got to be between Ryan Dungey and Stewart right now.

This is it for James, he's cashing in his chips and going all out for himself and his career. If he doesn't show his old speed and old results on Suzuki, there aren't too many more people in the pits that would pick him up. His old rival Chad Reed was also once in this predicament when no factory team wanted him and he was forced to get a production bike and bet on himself. That gamble worked, will this one?

I know one thing, no matter what side of the pond you're on, you'll be watching because as with all things James Stewart, you just don't want to miss a thing.





MX

GRAND PRIX OF BULGARIA

SEVLIEVO · APRIL 22nd · Rnd 2 of 16

MX1 winner: Gautier Paulin, Kawasaki

MX2 winner: Tommy Searle, Kawasaki

GO GREEN...

By Adam Wheeler, all photos by Ray Archer



Watch Bulgaria highlights
VIDEO



The Grand Prix of Bulgaria will hold a significant place in the story of the 2012 FIM Motocross World Championship for three reasons.

Firstly it was an early moment in the season when the emphasis swung away from the Red Bull KTM team that had dominated round one in the Dutch sand. Sevliev was a Kawasaki party in MX1 and MX2 and – as several riders were commenting – the championship really got underway with the trip to Bulgaria, rather than the sandy domain of Herlings and Cairoli. Secondly the series lasted less than two rounds before injury misfortune claimed the first of the title candidates, Monster Energy Yamaha's Steven Frossard, who has burst into MX1 prominence at the same hard-pack venue twelve months earlier on his Yamaha debut. Lastly Bulgaria represented the rubber stamp of Gautier Paulin's credentials as an MX1 star in his maiden campaign on the factory Kawasaki; the Frenchman was smooth, fast and faultless in front of the rejuvenated Christophe Pourcel. Pourcel is still championing Kawasaki's stock KX450F and his pace with effective line choices was a reminder of this fierce talent.

Tommy Searle chunked the gauntlet at main title rival Herlings in MX2 as Joel Roelants again made the top three. Bulgaria will not be the last time these three riders share champagne spray. Bulgaria had a good crowd, decent weather and a fast and uncomplicated track as well as some new faces in the limelight to further mix the MX1 and MX2 pot.



Frossard crowds out Desalle at the start of the Qualification Heat. The Belgian would get revenge by forcing the Frenchman wide on the first lap and the incident kick-started a frenzied few laps for the Monster Energy rider. The end result would be a collision with Bobryshev and a broken knee



Searle was unstoppable at Bulgaria and was happy to get out of the Dutch sand and Herlings' 'property'. The Kawasaki rider's success at Sevlievo narrowed the MX2 chase until the events of Italy



Pick a line. The high speed and relatively straightforward demands of Sevlievo saw Cairoli struggling to match the Kawasakis





Ride a lap of Sevlievo
VIDEO



Gautier Paulin won the last MX1 GP as a wild-card. Bulgaria gave him two out of the last three in the class. His overall success was also the first for the works Kawasaki Racing Team since France in 2008



Watch Gautier Feature
VIDEO



Desalle exits the pits with damaged bars in the second moto after his crash. The aim was to salvage points, which he did with 18th place

CLASSIFICATION & WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

MX1 OVERALL RESULT

Riders

1	Gautier Paulin, FRA	Kawasaki
2	Christophe Pourcel, FRA	Kawasaki
3	Tony Cairoli, ITA	KTM
4	Ken De Dycker, BEL	KTM
5	Evgeny Bobryshev	Honda

MX2 OVERALL RESULT

Riders

1	Tommy Searle, GBR	Kawasaki
2	Jeffrey Herlings, NED	KTM
3	Joel Roelants, BEL	Kawasaki
4	Jeremy Van Horebeek, BEL	KTM
5	Max Anstie, GBR	Honda

MX1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 2 OF 16 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Tony Cairoli	88
2 Gautier Paulin	79
3 Clement Desalle	67
4 Ken De Dycker	63
5 Christophe Pourcel	59

MX2 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 2 OF 16 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Jeffrey Herlings	94
2 Tommy Searle	87
3 Joel Roelants	85
4 Jeremy Van Horebeek	74
5 Max Anstie	57





BACKPAGE

2012 Monster Energy girls

By Ray Archer/JP Acevedo





'On-track Off-road' is a free, bi-weekly publication for the screen focused on bringing the latest perspectives on events, blogs and some of the very finest photography from the three worlds of the FIM Motocross World Championship, the AMA Motocross and Supercross series' and MotoGP. 'On-track Off-road' will be published online at www.ontrackoffroad.com every other Tuesday. To receive an email notification that a new issue available with a brief description of each edition's contents simply enter an address in the box provided on the homepage. All email addresses will be kept strictly confidential and only used for purposes connected with OTOR.

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